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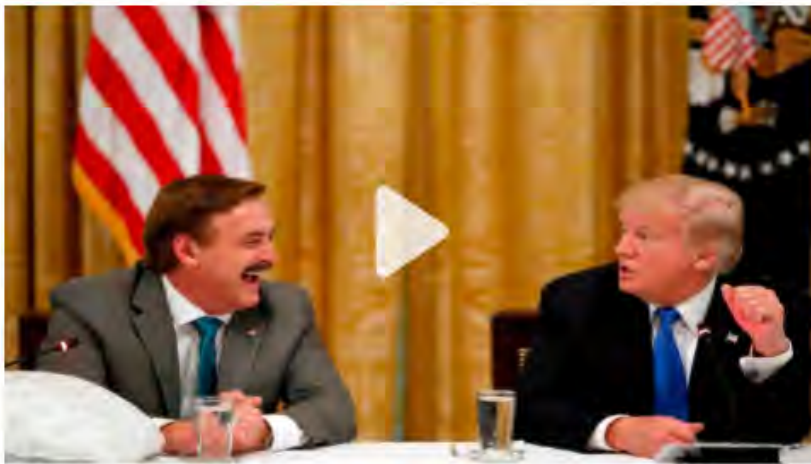
2018

How Mike Lindell, the MyPillow guy, became a midterm messenger



By Betsy Klein, CNN

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My Pillow CEO campaigns for Trump

Columbia, Missouri (CNN) — President Donald Trump isn't getting much sleep, and neither is Mike Lindell. But with days to go before the midterm elections, don't blame their pillows.

Lindell, the mustachioed "MyPillow" inventor and infomercial star, is doing his part ahead of next Tuesday, hitting the road in support of conservative candidates and popping up at many a Trump rally across the country. Lindell, one of just a few "celebrity" endorsers, gave Trump his seal of approval early and remains a key supporter.

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hitting the road in support of conservative candidates and popping up at many a Trump rally across the country. Lindell, one of just a few “celebrity” endorsers, gave Trump his seal of approval early and remains a key supporter.

Though Lindell might not be a household name, his MyPillow certainly is, and he’s a recognizable guy, his high-energy infomercials having been on television more than 7 million times.



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Lindell, an evangelical Christian and former crack cocaine addict who has been sober 10 years this January, has forged an unlikely path to the political arena, one that literally came about as the result of two dreams.



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The first, in 2004, when Lindell dreamed of inventing the perfect pillow. He developed and patented his foam pillow, pitching it from a mall kiosk to fairs, home shows and expos, and, ultimately, on unscripted, nationally televised infomercials. After his first infomercial aired in 2011, Lindell’s Minnesota-based [company grew](#)

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The second dream, in 2015, came shortly before Trump declared his candidacy.

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The second dream, in 2015, came shortly before Trump declared his candidacy.

"I actually had a dream that I would meet Donald Trump in an office, and then all of a sudden he ran for president," Lindell recalled in an interview with CNN this week. "I didn't know why and then he came down that (escalator), he's running for president."

A year later, he had a private meeting with the then-Republican nominee in his Trump Tower office. The two talked about Made in America – his pillows are made in the USA – and inner city initiatives.

'I just believed in Donald Trump'



Alex Brandon/AP

That meeting sealed the deal.

"I just believed in Donald Trump so much after that meeting with him ... He has a heart that cares. And maybe people don't see that out there when he's on TV and stuff, because he's such a fighter and wants to win and wants to help this country so bad and help people," Lindell said.

Lindell endorsed Trump, appearing in the "spin room" at two general election debates and speaking at a Minnesota rally days before the election. He's been an



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Lindell admits he was “very uneducated” when it came to politics before Trump entered the arena.

“I had to learn what a liberal was, what a conservative was. I didn’t know anything about politics. I’m not kidding. I was an addict, I was a crackhead. I didn’t get into politics and I didn’t realize how important they were,” he said.

Two years later, the entrepreneur has endorsed a slate of candidates, ranging from Minnesota Republican gubernatorial candidate Jeff Johnson to Virginia Republican Senate candidate Corey Stewart.

“The reason I hope that the Republicans hold the house is so (Trump) gets the backing he needs to finish all the promises that he’s made,” he said.

In the last two weeks alone, Lindell has criss-crossed the country, attending Trump rallies, visiting the White House for an opioid bill signing, appearing at political fundraisers, speaking to millennials at an evangelism event, attending an event with Lara Trump, whom he considers a friend, and talking pillows on QVC. On Friday, Lindell traveled to the Florida Panhandle to hand out 10,000 pillows to hurricane victims.

He’s been to a cadre of Trump rallies: Rochester, Minnesota; Fargo, North Dakota; Houston, Texas, and Thursday in Columbia, Missouri. He pays for his own transportation and lodging. He spoke on stage before the President in Rochester, but mostly, he just roams around with his VIP badge, talking to supporters.

In the lead-up to Trump rallies, loud music blaring and an atmosphere much like a rock concert, Lindell holds court. Attendees form a line, clamoring to get a photo with the “MyPillow Guy.”

Here in Columbia, a volunteer held the crowd back as he greeted red-hatted fans, receiving line-style.

Karin Housley, who is running for Democrat Al Franken’s Senate seat in Minnesota, is one candidate benefitting

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Here in Columbia, a volunteer held the crowd back as he greeted red-hatted fans, receiving line-style.

Karin Housley, who is running for Democrat Al Franken's Senate seat in Minnesota, is one candidate benefitting from Lindell's star power.

Last week, Lindell lent his name (“Mike Lindell – My Pillow” in the “from” line) to a fundraising email on Housley’s behalf: “Friend – you may know me from inventing MyPillow, but that’s not why I am emailing you today. I want to tell you about Karin Housley and why her United States Senate race is critical to Minnesota and the rest of our country.”

A spokesperson for Housley praised Lindell for using his platform to “stand up for the issues that are important to him and many Minnesotans.”

"He has spoken on Karin's behalf a number of times and we really appreciate all he's doing to help out our campaign," Housley spokesman Jake Schneider told CNN.

So why should voters listen to the “MyPillow guy” when they head to the polls on Tuesday?

“Because they trust me. I do my due diligence,” he said. “When I put my credibility behind someone, or anything – even if it’s a product,” he said. “To me, it has to help people. I would ruin my credibility if I put my stamp of approval of anything I didn’t do my due diligence on.”

The “MyPillow guy”

While some companies have faced backlash for supporting Trump, Lindell says the pillow business hasn't been affected by his politics – in fact, it's growing.

"It's been very good for business, but I just do what I'm supposed to do, what God's called me to do. And I really – I'm not going to back down," he said.

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When many advertisers pulled their ads from Fox News' Ingraham Angle after a tweet host Laura Ingraham posted mocking Parkland shooting survivor David Hogg, Lindell stood by her.

"You wanna boycott me, that's fine, but I'm not changing my advertising. I'm going to do what I'm gonna do, and I believe in (Trump)," he said. "I've stuck by my beliefs, I'm not going to change. And every day, my business – they say, 'What's your busiest day?' and I say, 'It's the day we're sitting in.' I'm not kidding. We just keep getting busier and busier."

Being known as the "MyPillow Guy" doesn't bother him "at all," Lindell said, noting that about half of the people he meets know his actual name. (Although when I asked one lady, who was showing off her selfie, what she thought of Mike Lindell, she asked, "Who?")

"Absolutely, that doesn't bother me, that's my platform," he said. But he hopes to use that platform to evangelize and help others struggling with addiction.

Lindell is open about his crack cocaine addiction, bringing it up unprompted multiple times. He's currently developing the Lindell Recovery Network, a resource for those seeking faith-based addiction treatment that will roll out early next year.

After Election Day, it's Lindell's hope that he can work with politicians he is helping to elect to ease regulations in the addiction treatment arena.

"I want to get these people help," he said.

As to whether he'd consider entering the political arena himself, Lindell isn't ruling it out.

"Right now, no, but if God wanted me to do it, if I got it in prayer. I would do it tomorrow," he said.

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"Right now, no, but if God wanted me to do it, if I got it in prayer, I would do it tomorrow," he said.

"Put it this way, nothing would scare me. I've watched what God's done in my life and nothing would surprise me," he added, remarking aloud that he is "an ex-crack addict who's sitting with the President of the United States."

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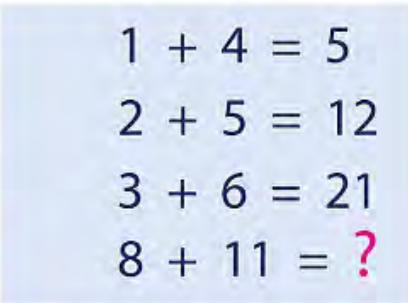
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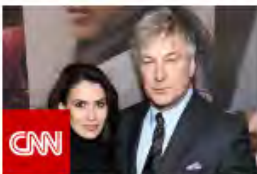
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